

# Euclid discusses increasing sewer rates for technology

■ Officials say system upgrades likely to cost about \$136 million

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The city of Euclid will look to move forward with the highest technology option available for the mandated improvements to the city's water treatment facilities.

It was previously thought that those upgrades would cost \$150 million for the advanced technology, but further investigation revealed that the total bill will now be \$136 million.

The lowest option the city considered was closer to \$104 million, although long-term savings are what drove officials to this decision, Law Director Chris Frey said.

"For the long-term we believe that this is the best alternative that we can present to all of us as consumers of this public service," he said.

Mayor Bill Cervenik sent out a letter to residents last month that estimated the rate increase would total about \$10 per quarter, although the actual increase will be \$12.

Talk of residential prop-

## Documents online

Check out the Power Point presentation from the Euclid public hearing.

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erty being acquired for the project is no longer on the table, and the only land that will need to be purchased by the city is privately owned commercial property.

The upgrades to the city's facilities are required by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Water Act, which has been in existence for about 40 years.

Frey expects that the facility will be producing cleaner water than what is in Lake Erie at this time.

The need for the upgrades comes from the current system's inability to handle large quantities of water during heavy storm weather. During these instances, partially treated water is released into the lake before it has completely passed through the plant.

The upgrades must be completed within a 10- to 15-year time frame otherwise the city faces steep charges from the U.S. EPA.

Officials will work to extend that time frame so that the rate increases could potentially be lowered for

residents.

Frey expects 30 percent of the total bill to be covered by federal and state grants and another 30 percent to be covered by low-interest loans.

The rate increases will fund about \$70 million of the initial project cost, Frey said.

Part of the upgrades include two new equalization tanks that will be able to hold 250 million gallons of water total, and will prevent partially treated water from entering the lake.

The tanks will be constructed underground, and eventually park land or parking lots will be constructed over them.

The rate increases will be in effect in the third quarter of this year, and more increases are expected for January 2013.

Construction will also begin sometime in 2013, although system upgrades could begin sooner, as many details are already in place.

"Not only do we have a legal obligation... but I think we have a moral obligation to make our lake water as clean as we can realistically make it so that our children, our grandchildren are able to utilize our most precious natural resource, our Lake Erie, in its intended use," Frey said.